

The Southeast News

VOLUME XI, NUMBER 11

SEPTEMBER 1963

Rev. A. Ray Meserve On Leave Of Absence

It was with the deepest regret that First Congregational Church of Knoxville, Tennessee, said farewell on the last Sunday in August to the pastor who had served so faithfully during the six years of its existence. Rev. A. Ray Meserve asked for a year's leave of absence with the hope of rebuilding his health so that he may return. He suffered a severe heart attack early in the summer that has made it difficult to carry on the heavy duties of his ministry, but he has made such a place for himself and his wife in the hearts of the congregation that they were unwilling to give him up permanently and are looking forward to his return. An interim pastor is being sought, preferably an able retired minister with a wife who can offer leadership in the women's organization.

The church was organized under the Congregational Board by a group that was unwilling to follow the members of the Second Presbyterian Church when a new building was erected at some distance from the center of the city. The original downtown church was purchased by the dissenting group and became the First Congregational. Starting with fifty members, it has grown to 250 under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Meserve.

As a farewell to the beloved minister and his wife a church picnic was held at Fountain City Park on the evening of August 25th, and a large number of the congregation gathered for the impressive vesper service that followed the supper. Voices were raised in familiar hymns, and then Mr. Meserve gave a brief farewell message on stewardship of time, money, and talent. He and Mrs. Meserve left the next day for Groton, Massachusetts, to spend the coming months among old friends and relatives.

In Knoxville there will be many who will unite in prayer for his speedy recovery.

Helen E. Galbreath

Fall Association And Conference Meetings

The annual fall meetings of the Associations and Conferences of the Southeast Convention will be held during the period of October 5 through October 19.

The churches of the convention are urged to be represented at their respective associations and conferences by delegates and visitors. All ministers and pastors should plan to attend.

The Rev. Karlton C. Johnson, secretary of the Southern Region Office of the Stewardship Council of the United Church, is the guest speaker for the meetings.

The schedule of the meetings is as follows:

S. Ala.-N. W. Florida Assn.
Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 5-6
Good Hope Church, Baker, Fla.
Begins 2 p. m. on Saturday
Rev. E. H. Henby, Moderator

Central Alabama Association
Monday, October 7, 3:30 p. m.
Mt. Olive Church, Talladega, Ala.
Rev. Andrew Nelson, Moderator

North Alabama Association
Tuesday, October 8, 10:00 a. m.
Robertson's Chapel, Arley, Ala.
Rev. Roger Whitley, Moderator

Kentucky-Tennessee Conference
Saturday and Sunday, October 12-13
Brookmeade Church, Nashville, Tenn.
Begins at 1 p. m. on Saturday
G. E. Farmer, Moderator

East Alabama Association
Wednesday, October 16, 10 a. m. CST
Noonday Church, Wedowee, Ala.
Thursday, October 17, 10 a. m. CST
Langdale, Ala. CC Church
Rev. George W. Stowe, Moderator

Georgia - S. Carolina Conference
Friday and Saturday, Oct. 18-19
United Church, LaGrange, Ga.
Begins at 2 p. m. on Friday
Rev. Charles V. Rary, Moderator
Plan now to attend your fall association or conference meeting!



Rev. Karlton C. Johnson Fall Meetings Speaker

The Reverend Karlton C. Johnson, secretary of the Southern Region Office of the Stewardship Council of the United Church, will be the featured speaker at the annual fall association and conference meetings.

Mr. Johnson, who has been in his present position since January 1 of this year, has primary responsibility for interpreting and promoting the total mission program of the United Church to the churches and organizations of the denomination in the region from Virginia across the south to Texas.

For nearly 20 years Mr. Johnson served in South Africa in religious work. He was the Assistant General Secretary of the South African National Sunday School Association and later Executive Secretary of the Johannesburg Sunday School Union.

Immediately before coming to his present position Mr. Johnson was on the staff of the New York Congregational Christian Conference.

A Letter To The Ministers And Churches Of The Southeast Convention From The Board Of Directors Of The Convention, September 10, 1963

The members of the Board of Directors of the Southeast Convention of Congregational Christian Churches, Inc., an Acting Conference of the United Church of Christ, are aware that actions taken at recent meetings of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and the Board for Homeland Ministries concerning race relations have raised questions in the minds of many of the ministers and churches of the convention. The members of the board have carefully studied the resolutions passed and the programs adopted by the General Synod and the Board for Homeland Ministries.

1. While we recognize that there will be serious differences of opinion among the ministers and churches of the convention on the wisdom and rightness of the actions taken by the Synod and the National Board, we do not believe these actions should be permitted to create divisions among us.

The actions of the General Synod and the national board indicate their clear understanding that they have no authority over the local churches and ministers. On the one hand they are urging the churches to take certain actions, but with the understanding the decision rests with the churches. On the other hand they are informing the churches of the actions they are taking for themselves.

Contrary to what some critics are saying, the United Church is not seeking to exercise authority over the local churches. Local churches are not losing their freedom. Paragraph 21 of the United Church constitution clearly sets forth the freedom and autonomy of the local church. Paragraph 22 states the responsibility of the local church to actions taken by the denomination.

"Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference or an Association, should be held in the highest regard by every local church."

Therefore, we would recommend to each minister and local church that the resolutions and proposals adopted by the General Synod be studied. The church then may vote to support those it wishes, and register its opposition to those it doesn't.

2. The General Synod voted to refrain from giving financial support to churches and institutions which have

not voted by July 1, 1964, a policy of openness without respect to race, national background or ethnic origin, and to urge the instrumentalities, conferences and churches to adopt and pursue a similar policy. The Board for Homeland Ministries is giving consideration to its future policy in this regard. The members of the Board of Directors of the convention are opposed to this proposed use of economic sanctions and have so informed the proper officials of the United Church.

Even though these sanctions may be used against the convention and its churches, we nevertheless urge the churches not to seek to retaliate by withholding funds from the United Church.

3. There is no way for the United Church, the Southeast Convention, or the churches of the convention to avoid the problems of the race question. As our moral responsibilities. The United Christians we must be willing to accept Church has urged that we support the goal of equal justice for peoples of all races and that we open our churches to all who would confess Jesus Christ without respect to race.

4. The "Program for Racial Justice Now" of the United Church is to be financed by special offerings to be received at suggested times or at the discretion of local churches. Each local church is at liberty to decide whether it will participate in these offerings. (It should be noted that this program will not be financed by the regular Our Christian World Mission contributions of the churches.

5. Almost a decade ago the churches of the Southeast Convention initiated a "Program of Progress." Through this program the convention would take its rightful place among the other conferences and conventions of the denomination as a free and responsible body. It would gradually assume full responsibility for the financial support of its own program and would contribute to the total program of the denomination. During these years of progress the Board for Homeland Ministries has continued its financial support to the convention in accordance with the agreement. Each year the amount of the support has decreased as the churches of the convention have responded with increased contributions to OCWM.

Our goal of complete financial responsible contribution to the total work of the denomination is almost within grasp. Therefore, we would urge the churches of the convention not only to continue, but to increase their support of Our Christian World Mission. 75% of the OCWM monies contributed are used within the convention. 25% are distributed to the national boards and agencies.

6. We look to a grand and glorious future. Soon we will have opportunity to participate in the formation of a United Church Conference in this area which will include all of the churches of our Fellowship on a geographical basis. Through the bringing together of our white and Negro Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches we will have a stronger organization in the number of members, in our financial potential and in our commitment.

Our communities, our states, our nation and the world need the witness of a vital Christian faith.

Why Tithe?

1. It guides us by providing us with a method of intelligent giving.

2. It helps us by freeing our church leaders from a preoccupation with money for the more important task of ministering to people.

3. It places us all, rich or poor, on an equal footing before God.

4. It helps us by enabling our church to speak not about money in a begging attitude but about responsibility in a dignified manner.

5. It shows us in a concrete manner the everyday meaning of real gratitude to God for the many things He has given to us.

6. By making us responsible with a fixed per cent of our income, it teaches us responsibility in the handling of all our possessions.

7. Like all truly Christian living, it brings to us the joy of an honest and important participation in God's work in this world.

8. It places us within a mighty tradition because it has Scriptural authority.

9. It helps us to see that all of living, even the making of a personal budget and the spending of money, can be done to God's glory.

United Church Helps In Yugoslavia Disaster

As soon as we learned of the earthquake disaster in Skopje, Yugoslavia, we sent one thousand dollars downstairs to the Church World Service office to express our sympathy and give aid. Within hours CWS had made available in Yugoslavia fifteen thousand dollars and some 347 tons of SOS food already in that area. Fifty-eight thousand pounds of clothing sent by Lutheran World Relief were released for distribution. An additional 28,000 pounds of clothing are on the ocean now.

CWS airlifted one million water purification tablets, and three thousand blankets from the emergency reserve stock pile, and fifty-two large tents. I had the privilege of asking God's blessing on the first airlift from New York. Pan Am provided free air freight.

Within days checks began arriving from our churches. The first was for \$300 from Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The next for \$25 came from a retired missionary. Gifts continue to come.

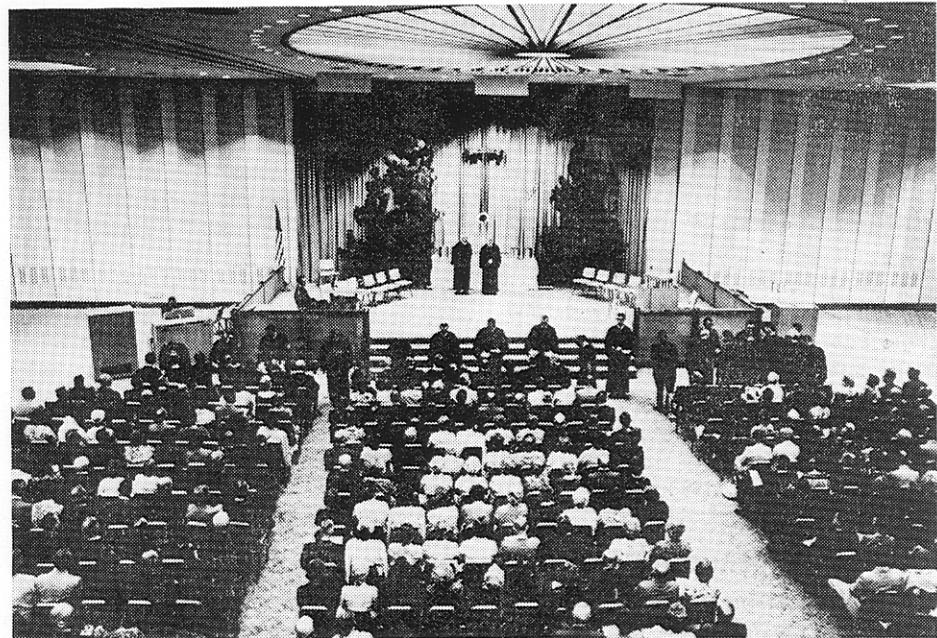
The purpose of this letter is to report that we are helping immediately as we did at the time of the Bali volcanic disaster and again when the cyclone swept over East Pakistan. Through the World Council of Churches the Protestant fellowship around the world has agreed to provide wooden pre-fabs (26 x 26 feet) before winter sets in for one of the new towns which will house the Skopje refugees. CWS has pledged \$150,000.

Remember that blankets, layettes, and warm clothing are needed. Send these to your nearest CWS Clothing Center.

With joyous confidence in the loving-kindness of our people,

Sincerely yours,
Reginald H. Helfferich
General Secretary
Division of World Service

OCWM contributions so far this year total \$18,712.83, which is almost \$900 more than last year at this time. However at least double the amount must be received before the end of the year if the budget is to be met. Churches which have not contributed or are behind in their payments are urged to make every effort to help the convention reach its goal.



The scene above is the General Synod of 1963 of the United Church at Denver, Colorado, during the Communion Service, which was one of the high points of the Synod meeting.

HERE AND THERE HERE AND THERE

Daisy CC Church

The Daisy Congregational Christian Church, Daisy, Tennessee, is planning its annual homecoming for Sunday, October 6, according to an announcement recently made by Rev. Raymond Ashley, pastor, and Mrs. Herman Ables, clerk of the church.

The Church School sessions will begin at 10 a. m. The regular morning worship service will be held at 11 o'clock.

A picnic lunch will be served at 12:30 p. m. All former members and friends of the church are invited to attend.

* * * *

Board Of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors of the convention met at the convention offices in Central Congregational Church, Atlanta, on Tuesday, September 10. Approximately 30 members and visitors were present.

One important action by the board was the adoption of the communication to the churches which is printed on page 2 of this issue of The Southeast News.

Other important actions of the board included the appointment of the officers of the Women's Fellowship to the

new convention committee on Lay Life and Work. Rufus G. Obrecht is to serve as chairman.

Rev. L. Floyd Carmack, LaGrange, Ga., was appointed chairman of the Evangelism Committee to succeed Rev. John D. Schofield, who has moved from the area.

Rev. Harold C. Henderson, Montgomery, was appointed chairman of the committee on Stewardship and Missionary Education. He replaces Rev. A. Ray Meserve, who has taken a leave of absence from the Knoxville church.

W. P. Ingram, Birmingham, who was elected moderator at the annual meeting in Huntsville, presided over the meeting.

The Committee on Christian Education met on Monday, September 9. Rev. Warren Blankenhorn is chairman of the committee.

* * * *

Curriculum Workshops

Recently curriculum workshops to help introduce Sunday School teachers to the new United Church curriculum have been held in several of the churches of the convention, among them Crossville, Chattanooga and Atlanta, Central. Churches wishing to have such a workshop are invited to contact the convention Minister of Christian Education, Rev. Emilie F. Pitcock.

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The Superintendent's Corner

A communication from the board of directors to the ministers and churches of the convention is carried in this issue of The Southeast News. It will have been received before the News is delivered.

I hope that every church and every minister will read the letter carefully and give it prayerful consideration. Certain words in the document stand out.

"There is no way for the United Church, the Southeast Convention, or the churches of the convention to avoid the problems of the race question. As Christians we must be willing to accept our moral responsibilities."

Much of the discussion within the meeting of the board revolved around the fact that while ministers and members of our churches may disagree with certain of the actions taken and resolutions voted by General Synod, we should not let this blind us to the fact that like the General Synod we must be concerned that this matter be faced and solved on the basis of the Christian gospel.

The great majority of Christians in this country and around the world are convinced that racial segregation is contrary to the Christian gospel. This is the expressed view of the General Synod of the United Church. More and more ministers and church members in the south are becoming convinced of the rightness of this view. This is true in our convention.

The time is here when we must examine our views as individual church members and our practices as churches.

This is a time of testing for the church — for you — for me.

Shortage Of Ministers Is Problem To Be Faced

A serious shortage of ministers in the near future is foreseen by the Rev. Dr. Harold H. Wilke, Cleveland, Ohio, director of the Council for Church and Ministry of the United Church of Christ.

The number of college students planning to enroll in theological seminaries seems to be dropping, Dr. Wilke told a preliminary committee reviewing the work of the Council over the past two years.

"If this trend continues," he said, "there will not be enough ministers to go around in another five years."

He pointed out that the United Church now leads all other major Protestant denominations in the percentage of increase of students in its seminaries—35 per cent in the last eight years.

However, there is a distinct decline in the number of young people now in their early college years who are deciding to enter the ordained ministry.

The Council for Church and Ministry is attempting to reverse this trend with a program of "person-to-person" encounters with small groups of college students, Dr. Wilke reported.

"We are not interested in 'selling' these young people on the ministry," he said. "We are simply trying to help them understand the meaning of the Christian vocation, to help them see the many opportunities for service in a world that needs dedicated lives."

Dr. Wilke emphasized that the church is more interested in quality than in quantity of men and women entering the ordained ministry.

What does he mean by quality? "We have in mind the kind of man who will become not only an able and effective communicator of the Gospel but a prophetic voice, daring to pioneer in new paths; the sort of person who has a deep pastoral concern for people and a keen intellectual awareness of the revolutionary situation of our world today," Dr. Wilke said.

(The churches of the Southeast Convention should be vitally concerned about attracting more young people to the full-time ministry. We do not have enough ministers to fill our churches now. As present ministers retire or move from the area, the need will become greater. Every church is urged to look for young people to challenge with the ministry.)

"The Cliff Dwellers" Filmstrip Available

A sixty-eight frame color filmstrip entitled "The Cliff Dwellers" has been added to the Southeast Convention library, and is available to our churches.

Prepared especially for the 1963-64 home missions study on "The Changing City", the filmstrip and reading script should help adults and youth: 1. examine their church from the perspective of the influences that characterize urban life; 2. develop a stronger sense of involvement in the church regarding the issues of urban life; 3. lead their church to a more effective ministry in high density areas; 4. become better acquainted with some of the characteristics of urbanization; 5. see metropolitan areas in terms of the people who live in them; and, 6. discern both the richness and barrenness of urban life."

Beginning with a description of the erection of a "high rise apartment", mention is made of some of the advantages of living in a high density area. Then the script focuses on the church by contrasting the traditional experiences of congregational life with the tensions of contemporary living. It touches problems such as isolation, depersonalization; it gives attention to the pressures of pace and time, the concerns of individual skills and interests, as well as the intricacies of relationships in a varied society.

"The Cliff Dwellers" is designed to be a tool to provoke discussion and action in youth meetings, women's meetings, men's club meetings, leadership training courses, church schools of missions, and summer institutes and conferences.

Southeast News Offers Special Rate To Churches

The Southeast News has been the publication of the Southeast Convention for more than ten years.

Through these years it has had its ups and downs in circulation. Largely this is due to the fact that people forget to send in the renewal for their subscriptions or ministers and church officers forget to give the people of the churches an opportunity to subscribe.

It is obvious The Southeast News can't serve its function unless it is read. How about your church? How many subscribers do you have? If you secure five or more subscriptions we'll give you the special rate of \$1 per year!

People . . .

Caddo Church Reports

Major Summer Events

We have recently closed our revival at Caddo Congregational Christian Church with twenty-four additions to our membership — 19 by baptism, 4 by letter. We had good attendance to hear the visiting minister, Rev. Deen Sims of Route 1, Trinity, Ala. He brought inspiring sermons at each service. Group singing was enjoyed before each service. We also met and cleaned the cemetery before the revival.

Our Bible School in July was an inspiration to the whole community. We had 115 enrolled, with 100 receiving certificates. Eleven women from our church group did the teaching. Different women furnished refreshments each day. Closing day we had a program and picnic, enjoyed by the children and parents and visitors.

We are very proud of our growing interest in and attendance at church. We hope to add more new members soon as we have new families coming to church now.

Mrs. Earnest Shelton

New Hope Church Has Several Improvements

The New Hope Church of Clio, Alabama, has been busy this summer. Even though the church is without a regular pastor it has been engaged in a variety of activities.

During the summer months two new rest rooms were built on the church and a new well was dug and a pump installed. A new recreation room was also added to the building.

The Rev. Ralph D. Worley, minister of the Williams Chapel Church, Waycross, Ga., was the visiting preacher for the annual revival. Attendance was excellent and the response to his sermons seems to indicate the church was "revived."

For use during the revival the people rented a new piano and electric organ. During the services they became so impressed with them it was decided to buy them.

Of course all of these projects have cost money. The church now is in debt, but the members are hard at work to raise the funds to meet the obligations.

The women have been having food sales and other activities. An auction sale is planned. It should not be long before the needed money is raised.

Churches . . . Events . . .

William R. Winterbottom

Will Serve Crossville

The Reverend and Mrs. William R. Winterbottom have arrived in Crossville, Tenn., to serve the First Congregational Church. They are living in Fairyland Acres.

Mr. Winterbottom was born and educated in Rhode Island. After several years in business in industrial traffic management and the advertising field, he decided to enter the Christian ministry.

He studied at Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine and was graduated from the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, where later he did graduate work. He also taught school in Miami. He plans to continue his theological studies at the Vanderbilt University Divinity School next summer.

While in Florida both Mr. and Mrs. Winterbottom served the Church-By-The-Sea at Bal Harbour, Miami Beach, as Minister of Youth and Director of Christian Education, respectively. They also worked in Maine as guidance counselors at the State School for Boys in South Portland.

Mrs. Winterbottom also is a native of Rhode Island. She is a graduate of Rhode Island College, studied at Kansas City College for Christian Workers, and has done graduate work at the Universities of Maine, Miami, and Florida.

She served as Director of Christian Education at All Souls Congregational Church, Bangor, Maine, while her husband was in seminary. She has taught school in Rhode Island, Maine, and Florida, and will teach in Crossville.

They have two married daughters and one granddaughter living in Florida.

Ministerial Changes

Rev. W. Walter Hall

The Rev. W. Walter Hall, pastor of the Congregational Christian Church, Asheboro, North Carolina, has accepted the call to become minister of the Lanett, Alabama, Congregational Christian Church. He will begin his new responsibilities the first of October.

Rev. Otto Culpepper

The First Congregational Christian Church, Andalusia, Alabama, has called Rev. Otto L. Culpepper to be its pas-

Among The Women

The program material prepared for Women's Fellowship groups is "Program Opportunities for Adults." This material may be ordered from:

Central Distribution Service
1505 Race Street
Philadelphia 2, Pa.

The price is \$4, postage free. Later you may order individual additional items included in this loose-leaf book.

Yearbooks are 10c and should be ordered from your state presidents. The presidents and their addresses are:

Alabama-NW Florida

Mrs. W. Raymond Berry
9614 Todd Mill Rd., S. E.
Huntsville, Alabama

Georgia - South Carolina

Mrs. Carl N. Sanford
5855 Mitchell Rd., N. W.
Atlanta 28, Georgia

Kentucky-Tennessee

Mrs. Rufus Obrecht
310 Green Gorge Rd.
Signal Mountain, Tenn.

Alabama - NW Fla. Officers

The following are the officers of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Women's Fellowship:

PRESIDENT

Mrs. W. Raymond Berry
9614 Todd Mill Rd., S. E.
Huntsville, Alabama

VICE-PRESIDENT

Mrs. Malon Simmons
1312 Fifteenth Place
Phenix City, Alabama

SECRETARY

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Wadley, Alabama

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Mrs. D. F. Elmore
4131 Cliff Rd.
Birmingham, Alabama

EDUCATION

Mrs. Marrell Rhodes
Box 622
East Tallassee, Ala.

tor to succeed Rev. Earl Temple, who recently resigned. At present Mr. Culpepper is serving the Enigma, Ga., Church. Mr. and Mrs. Culpepper will move to Andalusia the middle of September.

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS
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